

Appendix B - Regional Forums and Comments

What was the Purpose of the Forums and Where were they Held?

Between November 2003 and January 2004, NCDOT staff held a series of public meetings (regional forums) throughout North Carolina to share the SHC concept with stakeholders and gather their reactions in order to share input with management and the Board of Transportation. The three major objectives for the public forums were to:

- Educate stakeholders about the overall SHC concept.
- Gather stakeholders' reactions, ideas and critical issues about SHC concept.
- Educate stakeholders about next steps and timeframes in the planning process.

As part of this effort, NCDOT engaged NCDENR and NCDOC to partner and participate in the public involvement process. NCDOT contracted with the Triangle-based consulting firm AH HA! to help design and facilitate these forums.

Nine public forums were held throughout North Carolina (three in each of the geographic areas described below). The three geographic regions tended to share common concerns and are similar in physical and natural features. The forums were held in both urban and rural areas. This outreach approach was structured to ensure that both broad statewide and unique regional perspectives would be heard. The forums were held at community colleges, town halls, civic centers, and other popular meeting places. In choosing venues the NCDOT team sought ease of access and ample parking; audio/visual capabilities; good lighting and sufficient space. Each forum lasted two and a half hours and a variety of techniques were used to publicize these forums, including email, brochures, and announcements via newsletters and listserves.

West

- Bryson City - Nantahala Village, Mountain Resort & Meeting Center (November 18th, 2003)
- Wilkesboro - John H. Wilkes Community College (November 19th, 2003)
- Asheville - NC Arboretum (November 20th, 2003)

East

- Jacksonville - Commons Recreation Center (December 9th, 2003)
- Wilson - Wilson Tech Community College (December 10th, 2003)
- Williamston - Bob Martin Agricultural Center (January 22nd, 2004)

Central

- Huntersville - Town Hall (January 13th, 2004)
- Southern Pines - Douglass Community Center (January 14th, 2004)
- Greensboro - Guilford Tech Community College (January 15th, 2004)

These forums also supplemented the work done by Board of Transportation members to inform citizens of this new planning concept. One Board member in particular, Cam McRae, was instrumental in responding to numerous requests and making presentations to interested citizens in eastern North Carolina. Board Member McRae was proactive in helping to shape the early development of the corridor concept and has championed its importance to the public at-large.

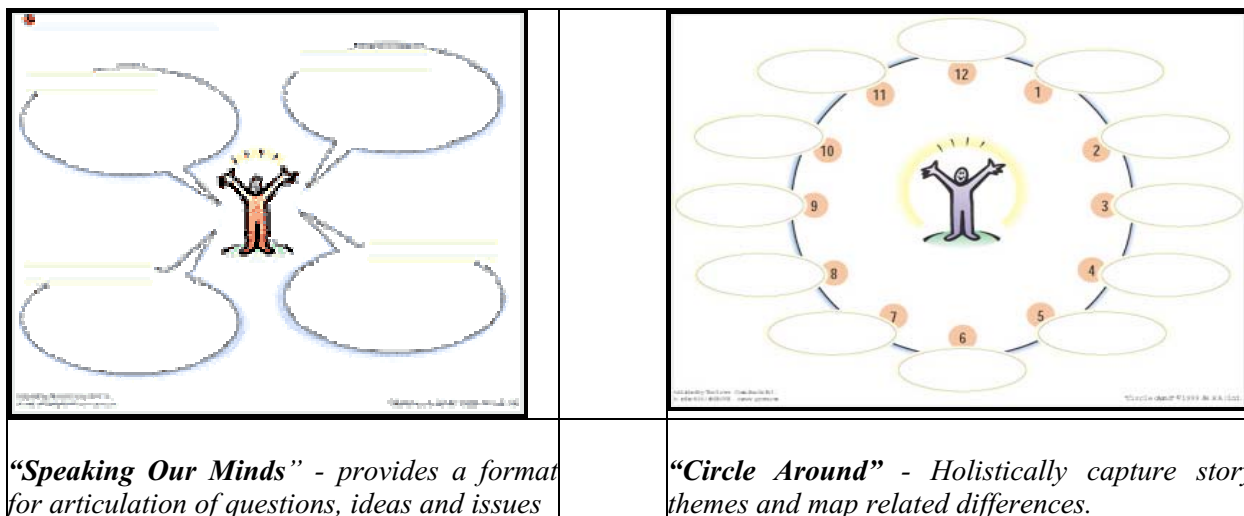
Since the SHC concept represents a new planning direction, NCDOT initially chose to engage those stakeholders who have a vested interest in the conceptual planning aspects of Strategic Highway Corridors (versus those with an interest in project specific details). Targeted stakeholders included local, state and federal agencies, economic development and environmental organizations, freight industry representatives, regional and local planning agencies, political leadership organizations, and other advocacy groups. Approximately 250 people attended the forums, with an average of 25-28 people attending per forum.

How were the Forums Structured?

The public forums were designed to promote open, honest exchange between NCDOT and the participants. At the same time they were tightly structured so that all parties could move forward productively. Each room was pre-arranged with roundtables of 6-8 people per table in order to promote a conversational tone. Each table had table sized graphic templates (see next page) taped on it, along with sticky notes and pens for participants. NCDOT also prepared handouts (see next page) on the SHC concept as a takeaway for participants. The forum agenda, outcomes, roles and rules were displayed prominently on wall-sized templates.

Visual frameworks such as graphics templates were used to capture and organize participants' ideas, questions and issues at the forums. When graphics templates are used, people become engaged in the process of sharing, listening, and building upon each other's ideas. As this happened, participants began to see (in the most literal sense) the big picture, and connections emerged. All participants had an opportunity to give individual input through the use of sticky notes that they placed on table graphic templates. AH HA! captured comments made during the full group conversations on wall-sized templates. These templates also aided in organizing the data collected at each of the sessions.

Examples of the Graphic Templates used during the Public Forums



Handouts Provided at the Public Forums

STRATEGIC HIGHWAY CORRIDORS

Purpose

- Enhance the Movement of People and Goods on Highways within Regions & across the State
- Foster Economic Prosperity, help NC stay Competitive in a Global Economy
- Maximize the Use of Existing Highway Corridors
- Minimize Impact to Surrounding Environment

Goals

Create an up front Planning Vision for each Highway Corridor that **Affects Decision Making**

- Funding Decisions
- Project Planning Decisions
- Design Decisions
- Day to Day Decisions (Access/Driveway Permits)
- Local Land Use Decisions

Selection Criteria


- Mobility:** The Corridor has Significant Traffic Volumes and is Vital to the State's and/or Region's Interest
- Connectivity:** The Corridor provides a Connection between Activity Centers
- Interstate Connectivity:** The Corridor provides a Connection between Existing and/or Planned Interstates
- Interstate Reliever:** The Corridor Currently Serves or has Potential to Serve as a Reliever Route to an Existing Interstate Facility
- Other Factors:** Hurricane Evacuation Route; Prominent Report Addresses the Need for Improvement; or the Corridor is part of a National, Economic, or Military Highway System

What Can You Do

- Communicate Importance of Good Access Management and Land Use Coordination
- Protect Corridors to Maintain High Quality of Service
- Consider Strategic Corridors in Planning Process (Local Transportation Plans)
- Promote Land Use Planning that Supports the Strategic Corridors Concept


Strategic Corridors in a Nutshell:
“A set of Existing Highways Vital to Moving People and Goods within and just outside North Carolina”

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SUMMARY SHEET

SELECTION CRITERIA for STRATEGIC HIGHWAY CORRIDORS		
Criteria	Statewide Strategic Corridors	Regional Strategic Corridors
Mobility	Facilities of Statewide Interest High Traffic Volumes; High Truck % Serves Long-Distance Travel	Facilities of Regional Significance Serves Regional Destinations & Commuter Traffic
Connectivity	Connects an Existing Major Activity Center to another Major Activity Center , Seaport, Major Airport, or Major Military Base	Connects an Existing Major or Regional Activity Center to another Major or Regional Activity Center , Seaport, Major Airport, or Major Military Base
Interstate Connectivity	Connects an Existing Interstate facility to another Existing or Planned Interstate facility	Connects an Existing Interstate facility to another Existing or Planned Interstate facility
Interstate Reliever	Currently Serves or has Potential to Serve as a Reliever Route to an Existing Interstate Facility	Currently Serves or has Potential to Serve as a Reliever Route to an Existing Interstate Facility
Definitions >Major Activity Center: Urban Area (City) having a Population of 50,000 or more >Regional Activity Center: Urban Area having a Population between 20,000 and 50,000 Other Factors >Corridor is designated as a Hurricane Evacuation Route >Corridor is cited in a Prominent NC Report >Corridor is part of a National, Congressional, Statewide, Economic, or Military Highway System		



What was the Format of the Forums?

Each forum was 2½ hours. Eight of the nine forums were held during the morning hours. Agenda included:

1. **Welcome and Overview.** (15 minutes) AH HA! began the meeting by welcoming participants and explaining that they were an independent consulting company who was invited by NCDOT to facilitate the forum. NCDOT staff then introduced the overall SHC concept and reviewed the three objectives for the meeting. AH HA! then reviewed the agenda and ground rules for the session and invited participants to introduce themselves.

Comments. The Welcome and Overview was designed to strike a friendly tone of “we are all here to have a conversation - but one that is structured.” There was a wall-sized meeting agenda, including outcomes, roles and rules. The roles stated that AH HA! was to facilitate; NCDOT staff was to share information and respond to questions; and participants were to participate. The rules were to listen, be open and honest, actively participate and build on each other’s ideas.

2. **The Ideal Highway System.** (20 minutes) Participants introduced themselves to each other at their tables and shared their perspectives about what elements or components make up ‘The Ideal Highway System’. After each table had an opportunity for discussion, AH HA! asked the full group to share their perspectives on this topic. AH HA! captured these on a wall-sized ‘Circle Around’ graphic template.

Comments. This exercise gave participants the opportunity to articulate what’s important to them when it comes to the highway system. It brought out their needs and concerns and engaged them in the discussion and set the stage for NCDOT staff to explain how the SHC concept fit into the context of an ideal highway system. It also allowed participants who had specific frustrations toward NCDOT or transportation projects to express those and see that they were captured on the wall template, allowing them to move forward.

3. **About Strategic Highway Corridors.** (45 minutes)

Part I - NCDOT Presentation. NCDOT explained the overall purpose and goals of the SHC concept using a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation focused on why the concept is important and how they might help to address some of the wishes and concerns that were expressed by the group in the previous activity. The presentation also included examples of corridors, what they look like, and an overview of the selection criteria.

Comments. This segment helped move the participants from understanding the common elements that make up an ideal highway system to understanding a key NCDOT strategy to meet this goal – the SHC concept.

Part II - Facilitated Discussion. After the presentation participants were asked to write their responses to the presentation and place them on their tabletop template using these four frameworks:

- Benefits: “What I like...”, “What this will do for me/us...”
- Challenges: Doubts, Concerns, Critical Issues
- Big Ideas: Ideas to build on the benefits or overcome the challenges
- Questions: Questions about the SHC concept or implementation plan

Each table then discussed their responses and common themes for each focus area were placed on the wall-sized template. This served as a starting point for the full group conversation with NCDOT staff. NCDOT staff frequently asked for clarification as questions and comments were shared in order to address the specific issue and avoid misinterpretation.

Comments. This segment of the forums helped participants to internalize and react to the goals and strategies of the corridors concept and helped NCDOT to continue to identify common themes and critical issues.

4. **Selection Criteria.** (30 minutes) NCDOT staff then presented the selection criteria and maps for the proposed Strategic Highway Corridors through PowerPoint. After the presentation large foam-board maps highlighting the Strategic Highway Corridors were displayed. Participants were then asked to give their reactions as follows:

- “What works is...”
- “What doesn’t work...”
- “Questions...”

Participants wrote their reactions on sticky notes and placed them directly on the NCDOT maps. As participants stood by the maps, one person from each group shared the responses with the full group.

Comments. The process of placing sticky notes directly on the maps gave participants a direct connection and helped to build additional buy-in for the public involvement process.

5. **Wrap Up.** (10 minutes) As a wrap-up to the formal portion of the session, NCDOT staff reviewed the key points about the SHC concept and explained how they will work with the information from all the forums to develop recommendations to the Board of Transportation. NCDOT staff also gave several ideas on what participants could do as a follow up to the meeting.

Comments. NCDOT placed an emphasis on how the Department is going to work together with stakeholders and partner with them as they move forward.

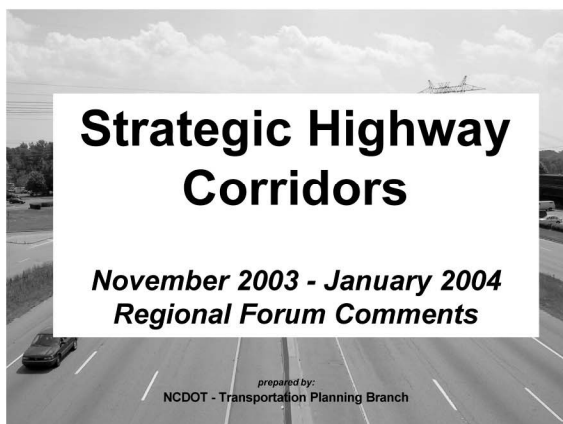
6. **Open Discussion (including Regional Planning Initiatives).** (30 minutes) After the formal program ended, participants were invited to stay and ask specific questions or share ideas with NCDOT staff.

Comments. In the three Eastern Region meetings, BOT member Cam McRae led a discussion on an Eastern North Carolina Regional Transportation Plan. Note: This Plan became integrated with the Strategic Highway Corridors Vision Plan.

Team Debrief. After each forum, NCDOT staff held a post session debrief in order to capture feedback, common themes, and critical issues from each meeting. This post-session analysis was compiled and sent to all Forum participants on February 19, 2004. These comments can be found on the following pages.

What Activity occurred Following the Forums?

Following the public forums, AH HA! led the NCDOT team through a one-day knowledge sharing and action planning session. This session was designed to build team alignment around knowledge gained from the public involvement sessions and make decisions about implications for the state planning process. The AH HA! team assisted NCDOT staff in developing a format to share their findings and helped outline a series of action items to advance the concept and report the overall effort within the NCDOT organization and to other partner agencies.



Bryson City - Nov. 18, 2003

Benefits

- ➔ Safety & mobility & freeway standards for Statewide Corridors is a good thing
- ➔ Overall concept is environmentally friendly

Challenges

- ➔ Further clarification of how concept influences project funding & if it negatively impacts existing projects
- ➔ Stronger consideration needed for rural areas--to meet rural area needs and for equal benefit (as compared to urban areas)
- ➔ Find ways to show connectivity to other states without committing another state to a road improvement

Bryson City - Nov. 18, 2003

Challenges con't

- ➔ Southwest NC is more economically tied to neighboring states vs. NC-- targeted Corridor improvement must enhance this situation
- ➔ Geographic designations as illustrated on the maps need further delineation
 - ➔ Southwest NC offers unique destination and services apart from other Mtn communities--maps should recognize this, depicting this area as a region unto itself OR simply rethink how "regions" are grouped

Bryson City - Nov. 18, 2003

Big Ideas

- ➔ Take Appalachian Development Corridor funds & other discretionary money out of the equity formula
- ➔ Revise definition of "Regional Activity Center"
 - ➔ Consider Cherokee, Sylva, Community colleges as activity centers too
 - ➔ Dillsboro, Cullowee, Sylva collectively act as a regional activity center

Questions

- ➔ Can other modes utilize Strategic Corridors for mobility?

Bryson City - Nov. 18, 2003

Comments from Maps

- ➔ US 74 West of Waynesville provides quality service
- ➔ Consider NC 60 as strategic to this region (Murphy to Atlanta connection)
- ➔ Be conscious of environmental challenges for any future widening of US 64 (Franklin to Rosman)
- ➔ Complete needed improvements to all of US 74 - referred to as Corridor "K"
- ➔ Recognize some of the shorter, critical connections--improvements to US 25 b/w I-26 and South Carolina line

Wilkesboro - Nov. 19, 2003

Benefits

- ➔ Concept promotes greater intergovernmental coordination
- ➔ Concept promotes safety and connectivity across the state

Challenges

- ➔ Emphasize connectivity & coordination to other states
 - ➔ Western NC citizens more apt to utilize Knoxville or Johnson City airports
 - ➔ Neighbors should be considering similar improvements on their side
- ➔ Boone/Wilkesboro area is isolated--US 421 provides only "pipeline" to rest of NC and world

Wilkesboro - Nov. 19, 2003

Challenges con't

- ➔ This concept may promote people to drive more thus further degrading the state's air quality
- ➔ Funding for future improvements and cost of construction will be tough to overcome
- ➔ Equity formula - understanding it and ensuring its fairness to majority of NC
- ➔ Acquiring local input (priorities vary from community to community)
- ➔ Tourist traffic different from day-to-day traffic
- ➔ Continue to preserve the environment, minimize local impacts

Wilkesboro - Nov. 19, 2003

Challenges con't

- ➔ Poor planning/coordination and slow delivery time (like 15 years) means once a project is finally built it becomes obsolete

Wilkesboro - Nov. 19, 2003

Big Ideas

- ➔ Consider "fast tracking" projects in rapidly growing areas
- ➔ Consider multimodal design standards to accommodate other modes--buses, bicyclists, and movement of freight
- ➔ Provide local officials/planners incentives to do land-use planning that supports the Strategic Corridors w/o legislative authority
- ➔ Revise definition of "regional activity center" - use a different measure with help of Commerce or other State/Fed agency

Wilkesboro - Nov. 19, 2003

Questions

- ➔ How does this concept get implemented? What is its lifespan?
- ➔ How does the Highway Trust Fund work-- how are funds dispersed, and why are certain facilities earmarked already?
- ➔ Will there be standard designs associated with all Strategic Corridors OR will standards be more site specific?
- ➔ How do we ensure fair equity--equal representation for all areas?
- ➔ Is a similar effort being consider for passenger Rail--ex. Wilmington to Asheville?
- ➔ Why not upgrade an existing road w/ a focus on alternate designs--ex. jughandles, superstreet ideas)

Wilkesboro - Nov. 19, 2003

Questions con't

- ➔ How do we ensure other facilities outside of those identified as Strategic will also be improved over time?
 - ➔ Should they be recognized as a separate layer?
- ➔ Why does planning/construction take so long?

Wilkesboro - Nov. 19, 2003

Comments from Maps

- ➔ Consider segments of NC 18 and NC 16 as strategic to this region as you restudy the regional activity center definition
- ➔ Consider/study other regionally significant facilities--US 21 from I-77 to Sparta
- ➔ Improve/Enhance travel b/w Boone and Asheville
- ➔ Consider/evaluate portions of NC 268, US 601, US 321 as regionally significant
- ➔ Improve overall regional connectivity in NW North Carolina

Asheville - Nov. 20, 2003

Benefits

- ➔ Concept promotes better human and natural environment stewardship
- ➔ This type of planning avoids traditional "piece-meal" approach
- ➔ Concept will save time--project process is streamlined
- ➔ Focuses the state on improving & maximizing use of existing infrastructure rather than on new development
- ➔ Will help to reduce sprawl and congestion; possibly a way to handle future growth

Asheville - Nov. 20, 2003

Challenges

- ➔ Funding, funding, funding
- ➔ Eliminate competition b/w regions for funding improvements
- ➔ Hectic pace of life means personal vehicles continue to be the best option, bike/ped options are considered less and less
- ➔ Politics should not interfere with an area's needs and safety & the "power" of any one region should not affect transportation priorities
- ➔ More new highways in Western NC creates negative impact to wildlife communities--fragmentation & population reduction
- ➔ Some environmental views are too extreme; highway planning and construction needs to happen now

Asheville - Nov. 20, 2003

Challenges con't

- ➔ A more transparent & simple planning process is needed
- ➔ NCDOT's compliance with the law
- ➔ Overall time it takes to delivery projects
- ➔ Equity issue--we need to ensure everyone has a Strategic Corridor through their area
- ➔ Maintenance of highways in NC is underfunded
- ➔ Highways need to be built for citizen safety, not just for moving trucks and goods

Asheville - Nov. 20, 2003

Big Ideas

- ➔ Restructure DOT Board to include more technical expertise
- ➔ Consider similar statewide network for Passenger Rail
 - ➔ Create a line for direct rail service b/w Asheville, Greensboro & Raleigh
- ➔ Broaden overall planning focus so that it's a truly multi-modal statewide vision/plan
 - ➔ Focus on a total, comprehensive planning process; not just on how to "move traffic"

Asheville - Nov. 20, 2003

Big Ideas con't

- ➔ Provide incentives for car-pooling vs. continued use of the single-occupancy vehicle
- ➔ Study possibility of returning to county-run transportation systems
- ➔ Construction of new roads should serve sustainability or not be built at all
- ➔ Encourage transit, bike use first before personal vehicle use
- ➔ Employ wiser planning to preserve surrounding agricultural and urban resources

Asheville - Nov. 20, 2003

Questions

- ➔ Have other forms of transportation been incorporated in this planning concept to form a more holistic approach?
- ➔ Why can't we introduce a more multi-modal planning emphasis statewide?
- ➔ Since it takes so long to implement the transportation improvement, what about if a community's goals change?
- ➔ How does all of this relate to Economic Development?
- ➔ What is the policy for highways if sprawl and adding lanes become major economic issues?
- ➔ How do you preserve the character of the agricultural land use surrounding a Strategic Corridor?

Asheville - Nov. 20, 2003

Questions con't

- ➔ How will this approach reduce the overall time in the planning process?
- ➔ Why have the obvious, blatant needs in this area been ignored for 15 years?
- ➔ Why is US 70 not a Statewide Strategic Corridor all across NC?
- ➔ How will this approach affect the rural communities/centers not meeting the minimum population threshold?
- ➔ Will local control of a Strategic Corridor cause problems?
- ➔ Funding -- where does it come from, how do we get more?

Asheville - Nov. 20, 2003

Comments from Maps

- ➔ Be conscience of Western NC's new national heritage designation (and cultural heritage too)
- ➔ Address the issue of connectivity/coordination with neighboring states
- ➔ Consider base closings or potential economic changes that affect Criteria/Corridor development
- ➔ Create wildlife crossings over major highways
- ➔ Consider regional bus system for Buncombe County area
- ➔ US 25 south of Asheville is a critical connection; surrounding area is growing rapidly

Asheville - Nov. 20, 2003

Comments from Maps con't

- ➔ Improve corridor(s) between Asheville and Boone
- ➔ Consider/study Newfound Rd/NC 63 as a regionally significant route
- ➔ Henderson to Brevard corridor can be planned as a true multi-modal connection via US 64
- ➔ Western NC's transportation dollars should not be spent in Eastern NC--there seems to be an inequity in terms of spending--Buncombe County area is in immediate need of better highways/roads

Jacksonville - Dec. 9, 2003

Benefits

- ➔ Promotes Economic Development
- ➔ Improves safety; higher mobility & traffic flow; better access and connections to places
- ➔ Maximizes existing resources and infrastructure--saving time and money
- ➔ Addresses Maintenance -- can improve how impacts to environment & businesses & communities are addressed
- ➔ Looks at big picture; a more meaningful way to plan--looks at entire system as a whole
- ➔ Reduction of secondary and cumulative impacts
- ➔ Separates facilities based on different needs & roles

Jacksonville - Dec. 9, 2003

Challenges

- ➔ Acquiring environmental permits; influence of politics and money
- ➔ Convincing the public of this direction
- ➔ Many poorly maintained roads in NC
- ➔ Working with small towns--create more bypasses OR go through towns--what do you do with a Strategic Corridor?
- ➔ Getting various regions and/or communities to work together
- ➔ Balancing mobility with access

Jacksonville - Dec. 9, 2003

Challenges con't

- ➔ Equity or allocation of funds is not fair
- ➔ Creating long range plans vs. providing near term action
- ➔ Flooding in Eastern NC--how to better deal w/ natural disasters
- ➔ Challenge of retrofitting existing facilities--don't underestimate this
- ➔ Wetland mitigation taking land off taxes roles

Jacksonville - Dec. 9, 2003

Big Ideas

- ➔ Build more Toll Facilities--study existing and new roads
- ➔ Further streamline the permitting process
- ➔ Hire PR firms to sway public opinion and reduce environmental opposition
- ➔ Separate cars and trucks on major statewide and interstate facilities
- ➔ Stop diverting transportation dollars to other uses
- ➔ Discourage strip development and encourage better zoning

Jacksonville - Dec. 9, 2003

Big Ideas con't

- ➔ Provide connection to parallel rail facility for freight movement
- ➔ Use the US Military as a revenue source for new roads
- ➔ Don't allow access on these facilities within city limits
- ➔ Create more frontage roads

Jacksonville - Dec. 9, 2003

Questions

- ➔ How will we coordinate w/ neighboring states--esp. South Carolina?
- ➔ How is the DOT doing with Interagency coordination?
- ➔ What really is a Strategic Corridor?
- ➔ How will projects be prioritized? Where will the money come from?
- ➔ Where is the stewardship of public dollars?
- ➔ What is the role of the local transportation plan? Esp. local land use?

Jacksonville - Dec. 9, 2003

Questions con't

- ➔ How are we going to facilitate this "Corridor-wide visioning?"
- ➔ What is the timeframe on the projects east of I-95? What does DOT plan to do to help Eastern NC and make us an equal part of the state?
- ➔ How will Strategic Corridors fit in with other transportation projects and other transportation modes?
- ➔ How will we address the balance of urban vs rural needs?
- ➔ What does Strategic Corridors mean to the everyday commuter? How is this effort different from other corridor studies in the past?

Jacksonville - Dec. 9, 2003

Questions con't

- ➔ Why only a focus on existing roads? Can we modify more?
- ➔ Will this be more inflexible than the existing process?
- ➔ How will NCDOT work with communities to protect these corridors at a local level?
- ➔ Does the Strategic Corridor Plan really promote the ONE NC concept?

Jacksonville - Dec. 9, 2003

Comments from Maps

- ➔ Difficult to differentiate b/w existing x-section & proposed
- ➔ Construct another means of ingress-egress to the Ports
- ➔ All Strategic Corridors need to be 4-lanes & limited access
- ➔ Limited hwy connections east-west; limited improvements north-south
- ➔ Inclement weather & sensitive ecology--these should be part of the Criteria
- ➔ Consider enhancements/aesthetics as you plan for these corridors
- ➔ Corridor Plan needs to be tied to resources

Jacksonville - Dec. 9, 2003

Comments from Maps con't

- ➔ Consider historic resources & cultural heritage & tourism as Criteria
- ➔ Concerned that CBDs of small towns will be bypassed Strategic Corridor Connectors only seem to be shown in large urban areas
- ➔ Unclear about map legend/color scheme--what is the connection b/w current roads and those ID'd as a blue road--what specific improvements are you talking about?
- ➔ Provide better connections to Outer Banks & coastal inlands
- ➔ There are not enough Interstate quality roads in NC
- ➔ Redefine regional activity center -- what happens if your RPO becomes an MPO -- does this affect decision-making?

Jacksonville - Dec. 9, 2003

Comments from Maps con't

- ➔ Better coordination with other state's plans
- ➔ Improve links b/w bases & corridors--military mobilization to the corridors should be important
- ➔ Provide good access to the Ports
- ➔ How are improvements to the Global TransPark going to be made?---consider clearly showing Crescent Rd on the Map
- ➔ US 258--improve from Kinston to Jacksonville for better movement of military
- ➔ US 17 should be a "continuous corridor", i.e, make it full control of access throughout NC
- ➔ US 17 should be an Interstate quality road NOW

Jacksonville - Dec. 9, 2003

Comments from Maps con't:

- ➔ US 74 needs to be an Interstate-quality road b/w Charlotte & Wilmington
- ➔ Work w/ South Carolina to complete I-20 from Wilmington to Florence
- ➔ Accelerate the completion of Wilmington outer loop and include the Southern Bridge

Wilson - Dec. 10, 2003

Benefits

- ➔ Safety, mobility and connectivity throughout the state
- ➔ Directs funding to most needed areas
- ➔ Hopefully it will reduce costs in the overall planning/project/design timetable
- ➔ Promotes Econ. benefits and spurs development
- ➔ Reduces stress, increases safety
- ➔ Creates a greater sense of organization for the statewide network; maximizes use of existing facilities
- ➔ Helps provide a vision/long range thinking
- ➔ Higher level of environmental stewardship

Wilson - Dec. 10, 2003

Benefits

- ➔ Effortless transportation
- ➔ Hopefully not repeating past mistakes
- ➔ Consistency throughout the system

Wilson - Dec. 10, 2003

Challenges

- ➔ Funding & equity; prioritization of projects in an equitable manner
- ➔ Consider unique regional needs within a statewide plan--some areas of the state have expansion needs while others just need to maintain the "great" infrastructure that they already have
- ➔ Getting from point A to B quickly and safely
- ➔ Cost to create interstate quality roads
- ➔ Meshing/further streamlining of federal and state laws and regulations

Wilson - Dec. 10, 2003

Challenges con't

- ➔ Strategic Corridors should cover all areas of the state--ensure equity, all counties should benefit
- ➔ Decades of inertia towards new location construction yet not all expansion needs have been met
- ➔ Lack of transportation infrastructure in the East
- ➔ Obtaining property and tracts of land to make the corridor a reality
- ➔ Convincing towns and regions to see the long-term benefits of not allowing new development to choke the existing highway system
- ➔ Potential to mitigate indirect and cumulative impacts

Wilson - Dec. 10, 2003

Challenges con't

- ➔ Highways should serve people & not just vehicles--need for more "humane" highways
- ➔ Does this concept further induce demand?
- ➔ Maintain the character of the communities while still keeping continuity--includes economic, environmental and social justice
- ➔ Permitting--utilizing this approach in tandem with the merger process should help, but we must consider protection of the natural and human environment
- ➔ Competition b/w regions in the state

Wilson - Dec. 10, 2003

Challenges con't

- ➔ Amount of wetlands down east create more problems than the Piedmont; greater environmental challenges
- ➔ NIMBY & NANW--must deal with this mindset

Wilson - Dec. 10, 2003

Big Ideas

- ➔ Create a corridor identified as the "technology corridor" - maybe b/w Eastern and Central part of the state
- ➔ Military presence provides an opportunity for financing future transportation improvements; military should also be involved in decision-making (greater role)
- ➔ Reserve ROW for Corridor improvements TODAY
- ➔ Rocky Mount should be considered for a beltway as on the large cities in NC
- ➔ Name a corridor after the closest or most significant town or municipality
- ➔ Work in greater partnership w/ the regional bus. community

Wilson - Dec. 10, 2003

Big Ideas con't

- ➔ Put the plan in place immediately
- ➔ Designate a DOT advocate that is truly identified with Eastern NC
- ➔ Stop transferring money out of the Trust Fund
- ➔ Re-write the Trust Fund, make the corridors eligible for funding
- ➔ Toll Roads are an alternate source of revenue (strong opinions both for and against)
- ➔ Get more federal funding
- ➔ Consolidate federal and state regulatory agency concerns

Wilson - Dec. 10, 2003

Big Ideas con't

- ➔ Make sure the projects improvements fit within the existing ROW to save time and money
- ➔ More shared decision-making and funding
- ➔ Create on going feedback/communication with the public--before, during and after projects
- ➔ Design themes, create a "brand" to sell this concept and/or individual corridors
- ➔ Lay out clear steps as how to work through a corridor plan, concrete goals and timeframes
- ➔ Major airport needed around Greenville-Farmville area--could spur econ. development, offers alternate option for travel

Wilson - Dec. 10, 2003

Questions

- ➔ How do we fund all of this?
- ➔ How are we going to implement everything?
- ➔ How will we prioritize these corridors?
- ➔ How do we address differences b/w regional, rural and under-served areas? A question of fairness and equity
- ➔ How do we keep the decision-makers on the same page over an extended period of time--esp. in light of changing situations; create more consistent decision-making
- ➔ How will we ensure Strategic Corridors is a long term commitment & not simply the next "flavor of the month?"
- ➔ When do we reevaluate this concept based on growth in the state? How often will this concept be reviewed?

Wilson - Dec. 10, 2003

Questions con't

- ➔ Who makes final decisions on determining corridor selection as well as what improvements will be made?
- ➔ What input do surrounding areas have in planning for these corridors?
- ➔ What are the implications for Strategic Corridors & NCMIN and vice-versa?

Wilson - Dec. 10, 2003

Comments from Maps

- ➔ Build all corridors to full control of access improvements--regardless of statewide or regional designation
- ➔ Map is misleading--color code the quality of roads, not all blue roads are equal---directed at the fact that there is a perception that the roads in the western part of the state are "better" as far as mobility goes
- ➔ Stay committed to connecting and preserving our military bases

Wilson - Dec. 10, 2003

Comments from Maps con't

- ➔ US 17 to US 64 across the Albemarle--new connection needed b/w Elizabeth City & US 64
- ➔ Make US 264 a "Statewide" Corridor b/w Raleigh and Greenville
 - ➔ Improve US 264 b/w Greenville and Washington
- ➔ US 70 b/w East End Connector & I-540 should be blue line
- ➔ NC 147, b/w I-40 and I-540 should be recognized
- ➔ Need a better "Cary to Fayetteville route" via US 401
- ➔ Make NC 11 a "Statewide" corridor
- ➔ US 301 needs to figure in planning as I-95 alternate (from South Carolina to Virginia)

Huntersville - Jan. 13, 2004

Benefits

- ➔ Econ development--both locally & regionally
- ➔ Smarter decisions for the long-term, consistent & integrated solutions
- ➔ Promotes better use of existing facilities
- ➔ Make travel to services easier and quicker
- ➔ Focuses on DOT's scarce resources
- ➔ Hopefully will reduce air pollution over time
- ➔ Ability to move large volumes of traffic efficiently
- ➔ Disperses traffic vs. concentrating traffic

Huntersville - Jan. 13, 2004

Benefits con't

- ➔ Continuity in cross-sections
- ➔ Improves safety; improves mobility
- ➔ Good to have a proactive plan
- ➔ Introduces greater predictability related to land use

Huntersville - Jan. 13, 2004

Challenges

- ➔ Avoid "under design"
- ➔ Implementation--how will politics hinder or assist the outcomes?
- ➔ Regional land use planning would be very important--don't get into the same shape we are in now
- ➔ Forcing local municipalities to use local funds for state road projects
- ➔ Decision-makers are out of touch--Ex. NC 73--local community wants turn lanes or better design improvements for high school or other land use and DOT only looks at a map and traffic & doesn't consider local input--decisions made in Raleigh, not Huntersville

Huntersville - Jan. 13, 2004

Challenges con't

- ➔ Local gov't needs to understand impact of limiting access & truly buy-in to concept
- ➔ Impact to consumers--DOT always uses scientific projections when they decide how to improve roads; don't forget the human element
- ➔ Adequate funding
- ➔ Air Quality attainment may emerge as a controlling factor
- ➔ Land use vision is for local gov'ts to implement -- historical tension b/w Land Use and Transportation must be resolved at a policy level

Huntersville - Jan. 13, 2004

Challenges con't

- ➔ Non-uniform land use regulation
- ➔ Managing access in the future--how do you explain to citizens they don't have access anymore? What ways will communities buy into access management?
- ➔ State relinquishing control of highway design & r/ships to local communities & locals relinquish control of land use planning along corridors
- ➔ Maintaining a consistent cross-section along a route when you move from urban to rural areas
- ➔ Political pressure will screw it up

Huntersville - Jan. 13, 2004

Challenges

- ➔ Local gov't and multi-jurisdictional agreement on priorities
- ➔ Demand management is largely ignored, it should not be
- ➔ Channel more funding to rapidly growing population centers
- ➔ Financial appropriation slow in coming
- ➔ Better design decisions
- ➔ Public awareness--property ownership issues

Huntersville - Jan. 13, 2004

Big Ideas

- ➔ Encourage multi-modal options--more modes to consider within these corridor studies
- ➔ Use ITS in corridor planning--ramp metering and HOV lanes
- ➔ Turn more control of funding to local and county entities
- ➔ Revamp the Highway Trust Fund to ensure fast growing counties are not short-changed
- ➔ Improve Aesthetics--constant grass cutting; reduce litter
- ➔ Strong(er) Access management policy at DOT
- ➔ Involve local planning dept and boards to establish greater protective measures; precede this by legislation

Huntersville - Jan. 13, 2004

Big Ideas con't

- ➔ Devise a larger regional plan
- ➔ Remove political influence, leave it in the hands of professionals
- ➔ Increase NC's gasoline taxes
- ➔ Interpretation narrows corridors to one highway
- ➔ Implement tolls for through movement
- ➔ Expand concept of "Strategic Corridors" to "Strategic Transportation"
- ➔ Corridor task force is to bind land use agreements
- ➔ Shed weight--reduce commitment to unrealistic goals

Huntersville - Jan. 13, 2004

Questions

- ➔ Local gov't buy in and role for local gov't?
- ➔ How will this process affect current projects local gov'ts are requesting?
- ➔ What is the decision-making process?
- ➔ What will public involvement be within a typical corridor study? And as this concept progresses?
- ➔ How will DOT implement this strategy?
- ➔ Will money be well spent?
- ➔ Who will be left out?
- ➔ What successes have other states had?

Huntersville - Jan. 13, 2004

Questions con't

- ➔ Are there perhaps too many plans and too many initiatives?
- ➔ Will streamlining the process significantly decrease construction time?
- ➔ Is the emphasis on road capacity and moving vehicles?
- ➔ Why are there no shoulders on major routes?
- ➔ More info on how Corridors were chosen?
- ➔ What will be the affect of roads not identified as a Strategic Corridor?
- ➔ What is the r/ship b/w the Strategic Corridors and the Intrastate system?
- ➔ Is DOT looking at long range funding?

Huntersville - Jan. 13, 2004

Comments From Maps

- ➔ Show destinations to corridors when they connect to other states
- ➔ Establish a maximum capacity (maximum number of lanes) for major highways
- ➔ How do proposed roads such as Garden parkway get reflected in the Strategic Corridor process?
- ➔ What is the consequence of breaking the state up into 3 regions?
- ➔ How is it possible that there is no high-speed travel b/w Charlotte and Eastern NC?

Huntersville - Jan. 13, 2004

Comments from Maps

- ➔ NC 150 should be added as a regional corridor b/w Shelby and Lincolnton
- ➔ Direct corridor connection should be studied b/w Raleigh and Charlotte
- ➔ US 70 to Morganton - study as regional corridor
- ➔ US 601, Monroe northward is of regional significance
- ➔ US 70, Statesville/Hickory to Morganton--regionally significant
- ➔ Corridor needed from Asheville to Boone
- ➔ Corridor needed from Western NC to Atlanta

Southern Pines - Jan. 14, 2004

Benefits

- ➔ Utilizing existing system
- ➔ More efficient use of tax dollars
- ➔ Minimizes environmental impact
- ➔ More travel options
- ➔ More holistic approach to planning
- ➔ Timeliness of improvements
- ➔ Promotes NCDOT/DENR streamlining concept
- ➔ Stimulates economy & Econ. development in under-served rural areas

Southern Pines - Jan. 14, 2004

Challenges

- ➔ Local gov't buy-in and support
- ➔ Getting local gov't along corridors to work together
- ➔ Preserving small town character
- ➔ Funding, buy-in and cooperation to the total concept
- ➔ Protect viewsheds by prohibiting visual sign pollution
- ➔ Changing cultural expectations
- ➔ Financing and flexibility--deal with Equity Formula restrictions
- ➔ Accommodate development w/o loss of capacity
- ➔ Design more bikepaths and recreational corridors

Southern Pines - Jan. 14, 2004

Challenges con't

- ➔ Assuring the corridors are part of a truly multi-modal transportation system
- ➔ Conflicts with property rights along existing routes

Southern Pines - Jan. 14, 2004

Big Ideas

- ➔ Think outside the box
- ➔ Give DOT greater flexibility
- ➔ Promote and educate for buy-in
- ➔ More emphasis on multi-modal planning
- ➔ Use rail for freight movements; use highways for passenger and local/commercial movement
- ➔ Need RPOs and MPOs and DOT to sell it to the locals
- ➔ Sell the idea, create broad levels of buy in and then funding will be easier to get

Southern Pines - Jan. 14, 2004

Big Ideas con't

- ➔ Allow DOT control for Corridor management--buying property and managing access
- ➔ Change legislation to amend Equity Formula
- ➔ Link highways to encourage Walt Disney or Busch Gardens to come to NC
- ➔ Utilization of dynamic message signs to alert drivers to upcoming changes

Southern Pines - Jan. 14, 2004

Questions

- ➔ Where will funding come from?
- ➔ How long and how will we implement?
- ➔ How does this fit with local land use plans?
- ➔ What will corridors look like? Standards for Statewide vs. Regional
- ➔ How is the selection process maintained or changed due to political clout or influence in that area?
- ➔ How do you ensure commitment to goals? Will this concept stand the test of time given changes in Administration?
- ➔ Will future state and federal funding be tied to Strategic Corridors?

Southern Pines - Jan. 14, 2004

Comments from the Maps

- ➔ Will need to control access to avoid building bypasses around bypasses
- ➔ Complete the gaps, ensure interstate movements b/w the states
- ➔ Consider intermodal system improvements
- ➔ Will additional Federal money come for I-73 and I-74
- ➔ Remove county boundaries from the Map--makes map too busy

Southern Pines - Jan. 14, 2004

Comments from the Maps

- ➔ Add NC 211 from Southport to US 17--regional corridor
- ➔ Enhance US 70 from Morehead City to Raleigh
- ➔ NC 20 from Raeford to I-95--regional corridor
- ➔ Extend US 52 as green line to South Carolina
- ➔ NW from Fayetteville to Raleigh--NC 55 and US 401
- ➔ NC 24/27 needs to be statewide corridor from Fayetteville to Charlotte
- ➔ Enhance Wilmington to Charlotte on US 74

Southern Pines - Jan. 14, 2004

Comments from the Maps con't

- ➔ 4-lane and limited access from Raeford to Lauringburg
- ➔ NC 24/27 Bypass, connections at Fayetteville
- ➔ Bypass around Spring Lake--I-295 to NC 87

Greensboro - Jan. 15, 2004

Benefits

- ➔ Quality of Life
 - ➔ breathing cleaner air, reduces congestion
- ➔ Supportive of efficient future land use management
- ➔ Assigns true priorities of the state--defines needs without politics
- ➔ Shift budget emphasis from "spending" mindset to investment-oriented thinking
- ➔ Safety
- ➔ Better partnerships, better involvement with Localities
- ➔ Facilitates better connections b/w modes

Greensboro - Jan. 15, 2004

Benefits con't

- ➔ Needs based, more factual decision-making process
- ➔ Access is better managed
- ➔ Invests in existing infrastructure
- ➔ Provides choices, more options to citizens

Greensboro - Jan. 15, 2004

Challenges

- ➔ How do we interface Land Use and Transportation better?
- ➔ Add Maint funds to keep up corridors, maintain high level of service
- ➔ Reducing time for construction--streamline project development time
- ➔ Integrating this concept with other modes of transportation
- ➔ When is enough, enough, no more roads!
- ➔ Funding over time and escalating costs to build roads
- ➔ Making sure the concept meets the users needs
- ➔ Transportation fiscal crisis will make it difficult to change the investment focus

Greensboro - Jan. 15, 2004

Challenges

- ➔ Regulatory challenges--greater commitment
- ➔ Big challenge for funding--balancing state and local needs
- ➔ Economic development pressures vs. systems needs
- ➔ Equity Formula needs to be reevaluated to take needs such as Econ. Develop and VMT into account
- ➔ Changes old habits--car pooling and such for the future
- ➔ Develop, retain & maintain a transportation professional workforce
- ➔ In corridors, will level of the authority to restrict access be greater?
- ➔ Meeting our commitment to the environment while delivering an effective transportation facility

Greensboro - Jan. 15, 2004

Big Ideas

- ➔ Focus on demand management; changing work culture as opposed to keep providing supply
- ➔ Have the same planning boundaries for every sector of gov't
- ➔ Make the best use of money by transferring Rail funding to needed highway improvements
- ➔ Dedicate resources at state/federal level -- have resource agencies focus exclusively on Strategic Corridors
- ➔ There is an opportunity for you to make this successful by getting more local input up front
 - ➔ Every citizen needs to understand--find a way to promote this

Greensboro - Jan. 15, 2004

Big Ideas con't

- ➔ As you plan for these corridors ensure Aesthetics is of primary importance
- ➔ Local option and regional option funding sources--find new sources of funding
- ➔ Incentives to business and ridesharing on the demand management side
- ➔ Why not use NCMIN to refocus responsibility within state, regional and local ownership and roles
- ➔ Consistent cross-section across long distance routes
- ➔ Strategic Bike Corridors
- ➔ Closer collaborative planning with local officials is essential for success

Greensboro - Jan. 15, 2004

Big Ideas con't

- ➔ NCDOT has to be held accountable for delivering projects as promised
- ➔ Create separate fund for construction and maintenance of Strategic Corridors
- ➔ Exempt Strategic Corridors from the Equity Formula
- ➔ Local areas/regions need on-going input in Corridor Selection
- ➔ Gas Tax increase to pay for Strategic Corridors

Greensboro - Jan. 15, 2004

Questions

- ➔ How will this interface with TIP funding?
- ➔ Funding to enhance facilities?
- ➔ Will this initiative divert money from other projects & cause delays in the TIP, esp. those not deemed strategic?
- ➔ Funding Interstate facilities?
- ➔ How would adoption of this Concept affect funding?
- ➔ What will be done to move this from a study to implementation?
- ➔ What type of actions will need to be taken to ensure timely implementation?
- ➔ How often would the concept be updated?

Greensboro - Jan. 15, 2004

Questions con't

- ➔ How do we maintain integrity when Econ. Development is involved?
- ➔ How do routes get added to the Strategic Corridors & TIP?
- ➔ How can we integrate the Land Use & Transportation issue?
- ➔ What can be used as an incentive for State and Local land use planning?
- ➔ How do we assure Strategic Corridors addresses our AQ problems?
- ➔ How will NCDOT address non-quantified factors--such as social and human factors?
- ➔ What are the impacts to these facilities if they are improved economically and socially?

Greensboro - Jan. 15, 2004

Questions con't

- ➔ What will we do to address secondary roads carrying high volumes of traffic?
- ➔ Loops promote sprawl?
- ➔ How do you do this w/o increasing vehicle miles?
- ➔ Political ramifications?
- ➔ What is being done to promote Demand Management?

Greensboro - Jan. 15, 2004

Comments from Maps

- ➔ More detail needed in most urban areas
- ➔ Study Direct route b/w Danville and Hillsborough
- ➔ US 70 as a reliever route
- ➔ US 64 convert to I-40 (signs and standard of service)
- ➔ NC 87 in Alamance County to US 64 in Pittsboro
- ➔ NC 68, and airport access issue
- ➔ Regional designation may need to be revised/restudied
- ➔ Stokes County connector US 220 to US 52
- ➔ NC 109 from Winston-Salem to Thomasville

Greensboro - Jan. 15, 2004

Comments from Maps con't

- ➔ US 421 to Bristol
- ➔ I-40 -- Bryan Blvd to Sandy Ridge Road
- ➔ Add Battleground Rd through Greensboro and High Point Rd
- ➔ Wendover through Greensboro
- ➔ NC 87 From Burlington to Reidsville
- ➔ NC 62 in Alamance County

Williamston - Jan. 22, 2004

Benefits

- ➔ Makes long distance travel easier
- ➔ Improves quality of life
- ➔ Promotes growth, levels the playing field, not just catering to big businesses
- ➔ A better way to plan--a plan for development vs. shotgun approach
- ➔ A better utilization of limited dollars
- ➔ Aesthetically pleasing corridors
- ➔ Long term will create more jobs and access to Jobs

Williamston - Jan. 22, 2004

Benefits con't

- ➔ Improves military movement b/w Eastern seaboard ports
- ➔ Land use brought to the table early on, forces conversations b/w developers, Commerce, DOT

Williamston - Jan. 22, 2004

Challenges

- ➔ Funding, funding, & funding--do something to improve Equity Formula
- ➔ How will we pay for all this?
- ➔ Politics & its affect on decision-making
- ➔ Access for industry on fully controlled freeways
- ➔ Provide a voice for communities in less populated areas
- ➔ Local buy-in, greater coordination with local gov't
- ➔ Coordination with other states
- ➔ Environmental challenges

Williamston - Jan. 22, 2004

Challenges con't

- ➔ Being able to react to changing conditions--Ex. Navy Landing strip in Washington County
- ➔ Serve small towns & move traffic but don't isolate those same towns
- ➔ Project prioritization
- ➔ Port challenges

Williamston - Jan. 22, 2004

Big Ideas

- ➔ Establish a stronger r/ship with NCCBI; use them to collect data
- ➔ Turn abandoned railway corridors into usable highway corridors
- ➔ Establish prominent safety features for the Corridors--truck rest stops, ITS, rumble strips
- ➔ Control Access and acquire ROW early on
- ➔ Tackle issue of true equity for the East
- ➔ Determine other Corridor Connectors to outlying areas

Williamston - Jan. 22, 2004

Big Ideas con't

- ➔ Return on Investment--do it right up front, you will see cost savings later on environmental issues, maintenance, etc.
- ➔ Coordination of local land use plans with Regional Transportation Plans
- ➔ Tourism should be incorporated as a Criteria in evaluation process
- ➔ Add "connect to universities" as part of the Criteria
- ➔ Dark asphalt is hard to see in the rain--lighting on highways should improve
- ➔ Have one plan that we "stay the course" with

Williamston - Jan. 22, 2004

Questions

- ➔ Where will the extra money come from to develop/buy access control?
- ➔ How do you balance funding when so much of system still needs to be expanded? How can we expand what we don't have?
- ➔ Will you support Tier 1 - Tier 2 counties?
- ➔ Who decides corridor priorities?
- ➔ How does this concept fit with TIP and remaining Intrastate projects?
- ➔ What will be the input opportunities throughout the process specifically for the business community?

Williamston - Jan. 22, 2004

Questions con't

- ➔ How do you decide b/w local & state interest?
- ➔ How to balance competing interests of neighboring communities?
- ➔ How do you convince other states to "get on board"?
- ➔ How is this initiative coordinated with other modes?
- ➔ How will the Norfolk Port be incorporated into the Plan?
- ➔ When can we expect to see the actual improvements with this?

Williamston - Jan. 22, 2004

Questions con't

- ➔ Who owns this Plan b/w DOC and DENR and DOT?
- ➔ How will we incorporate this idea into projects?
- ➔ Are new methods of construction on the horizon in planning or is "asphalt just asphalt"?
- ➔ How is the trend towards larger vehicles going to affect this?
- ➔ Who are the groups continually opposed to hwy const.?

Williamston - Jan. 22, 2004

Comments from Maps

- ➔ Map is misleading--no indication of existing road types
- ➔ How do RPO corridor priorities apply?
- ➔ Keep pushing Virginia DOT to improve US 17
- ➔ Proposed corridors are acceptable and proper

Williamston - Jan. 22, 2004

Comments from Maps con't

- ➔ Connection is needed from Greenville to NC 17
- ➔ NC 125 / NC 903 connector needed b/w Williamston & Greenville
- ➔ Highway US 264--should it be on the map, why / why not
- ➔ US 158 should be a Statewide Corridor
- ➔ Mid-Currituck Bridge--should it be included as a Strategic Corridor?
- ➔ Hwy 32 connection to US 64, Washington Co
- ➔ Where are the bridges that connect military over Neuse and Pamlico Rivers?

Williamston - Jan. 22, 2004

Comments from Maps con't

- Also connection of "Ag-East" to Greenville
- Senator Sanford said--"we need a major corridor from Raleigh to Norfolk"
- Elizabeth City Coast Guard Station is a major military station
- US 17 East--no shortcut to I-95--no major east-west route
- What is the status of NC 97?

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